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8 April 1966

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## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

PENDING US-SOUTH KOREAN STATUS-OF-FORCES AGREEMENT

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Office of Current Intelligence  
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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Pending US-South Korean Status-of-Forces Agreement

1. South Korea's pending status-of-forces agreement with the US threatens to become a major domestic political issue which could damage US interests.

2. Whatever the Pak government does about the treaty will provide the opposition with campaign issues in next year's election. If the government has not signed a status-of-forces treaty by election time, it is open to the charge of failing to obtain a long-sought national objective. If it signs the pending treaty without changes, the opposition can accuse it of allowing the US to treat Koreans like second-class people. The latter charge would be particularly effective because of the general belief that Korea is doing more than its share to help the US in Vietnam.

3. There is strong opinion within the government that Korea's involvement in Vietnam is a lever that should be used to get the US to reopen negotiations. Factions in the government party might seize the opportunity to attack President Pak if he makes no effort to revise the present treaty draft. The ensuing dispute would be sure to create even greater political instability.

4. Opposition politicians and the press assert that the government has accepted terms for dealing with criminal jurisdiction over US servicemen, civil claims, and labor relations that are unfair to the Koreans. The government itself is dissatisfied with parts of the treaty, which has been virtually ready for signing since last summer. The reasons given by

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Seoul for stalling have been, first, the prospect of serious domestic political trouble over normalizing relations with Japan late last year, and, after that, the issue of more Korean troops for Vietnam. Officials now are talking privately of delaying the signing until next year or later.

5. Unhappiness with the pending treaty focuses primarily on the provision dealing with exercise of criminal jurisdiction over US servicemen. Dissatisfaction is not so much with the substance as with the phrasing, which seems to the Koreans to take less account of their prestige than similar US agreements with other countries. They are particularly sensitive to the notion that the Japanese are accorded greater rights.

6. Foreign Minister Yi Tong-won has a strong personal stake in renewed negotiations. His poor performance in defending the troops-for-Vietnam measure before the National Assembly cost him the confidence of President Pak, his sole source of political support, and thus badly damaged his standing in the government. Yi would like to refurbish his image by posing as the staunch defender of Korean interests in status-of-forces negotiations.

7. No matter which way the Korean infighting develops, it is likely to have an adverse effect on US interests. Regime and opposition members alike portrayed the US as being ungenerous during the debate on sending more troops to Vietnam. Motivated by the same parochial political interests, they are ready again to make the US the target of their criticism.

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